REMARKS

Consideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

A. Status of the Claims and Explanation of Amendments

Claims 1-32 are pending. Each of the previously pending claims was found to be novel over the prior art. However, the office action rejected the claims pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,494,776 to Molbak ("Molbak") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,730,272 to Dobbins et al. ("Dobbins") and further in view of US 2002/0100660 to Stieber et al. ("Stieber"). [3/8/07 Office Action at pp. 2-4]. Stieber is a newly-cited reference.

By this paper, independent claims 1, 8, 14 and 27 are amended to recite, *inter alia*, "first, second and third acceptors in communication with one another" via a network, and also that each acceptor comprises processing means for sending an alarm signal "to a plurality of other acceptors." No new matter will be added to this application by entry of these amendments. Entry is requested.

B. Claims 1-32 are Patentably Distinct from the Cited References

The rejections of claims 1-32 are respectfully traversed. As explained more fully below, the cited references share the same deficiencies. Said simply, the references, taken singly or in combination, fail to teach, disclose or suggest a system for accepting money items or the like (i) having three acceptors in communication with one another via

the network or (ii) having each of the acceptors configured to send an alarm signal to other acceptors in appropriate circumstances.

Specifically, Applicants' claim 1 recites:

> "1. A system for accepting money items or the like, the system comprising:
>
> a network; and
>
> first, second and third acceptors in communication with one another via the network,
>
> each acceptor comprising
>
> sensing means for sensing parameters of an item submitted to the acceptor,
>
> processing means for determining acceptability of the item submitted to the acceptor in the basis of an acceptance criteria using the parameters thereof sensed by the sensing means, and
>
> communication means, associated with the processing means, for sending alarm signals from the acceptor and receiving alarm signals from other acceptors, via the network,
>
> wherein the processing means is configured to respond to a condition indicative of a fraud attempt by sending an alarm signal to a plurality of other acceptors using said communication means and
>
> wherein the processing means is configured to respond to an alarm signal, received by said communication means via the network, to modify the acceptance criteria."

1. Molbak's System Provides for Communication Between Remote Devices and a Central Location Only; Molbak Does Not Disclose Communication, e.g., Exchange of Alarm Signals, Between the Remote Devices Themselves

Molbak is directed to a coin acceptance method of receiving the contents of a coin hopper in a relatively short time period. Molbak's Figures 12-18 depict a coin counter/sorter and coupon/voucher dispensing device. [6/12-16]. These devices may

also include an I/O system (1308), which coordinates operation of the various systems (e.g., waste control, coin holding/transfer, counting/sorting, and voucher/coupon systems), receives and provides appropriate information and instructions to and from the user, and sends and receives information to and from ***remote sites***. [6/34-38 and 52-59; see also Figure 13]. Molbak says the exchange of information with these remote sites is "for receiving operating information (such as discount information, coupon information, and updated software) and providing malfunction or diagnostic or statistical information." [6/59-63]. From this text, Applicants understand that Molbak is suggesting that the acceptors exchange information with a remote site that is ***not*** an acceptor. Nothing in these passages or the balance of Molbak suggests an exchange of information between the acceptors themselves.

Figures 21 and 22 depict procedures for initiating such information transmission from a central location (2102) or from a remote location (2202), respectively, [18/13-14 and 39-40]. In Figure 21 (and its associated text), the central location instructs the remote site to download various information, such as relating to armored car transactions (2104), the various transactions that have occurred over a predetermined period of time (2106), or to service or maintenance status or problems (2108). [18/16-30]. In Figure 22 (and its associated text), the remote location initiates a call to the central location when the coin bags are nearly full (2204), or to report a malfunction (2206). [18/40-46]. Again, these passages describe communication between a single coin counter and a central facility, and do ***not*** suggest an exchange of

information between the coin counters themselves. Moreover, these passages certainly do not disclose the transmission of alarm signals between coin counters themselves in response to a condition indicative of a fraud attempt in one of the coin counters.

The present office action concurs with the above assessment of Molbak, and concedes that Molback does not expressly disclose "a modular network of cash handling devices coupled with each other, in which each component cash handler communicates with a central controller as well as other cash handling machines." [3/8/07 Office Action at p. 3].

Accordingly, it is undisputed that Molback fails to teach, disclose or suggest "first, second and third acceptors in communication with one another via the network" or "processing means [] configured to respond to a condition indicative of a fraud attempt by sending an alarm signal to a plurality of other acceptors..." as recited in Applicants' claim 1.

2. Dobbins Discloses an Individual Isolated Coin Testing Apparatus and is Silent with Regard to Communication Between Multiple such Apparatuses, e.g., Exchange of Alarm Signals Between the Apparatuses Themselves

Dobbins is directed to a method for improved coin, bill and other currency acceptance and slug or counterfeit rejection. The office action alleges that Dobbins teaches an individual, isolated electronic coin testing apparatus (10) having certain circuits as shown in Dobbins' Figure 1. Without commenting on that assertion, Applicants note that the office action does ***not*** allege that Dobbins teaches, discloses or

suggests "first, second and third acceptors in communication with one another via the network" or "processing means [] configured to respond to a condition indicative of a fraud attempt by sending an alarm signal to a plurality of other acceptors using said communication means" as recited in Applicants' claim 1. Applicants' own review of Dobbins finds no such disclosure.

3. **Stieber** ***Provides a Network of Peripheral Cash Handling Devices Which Communicate with a Base Device; Stieber Does Not Disclose Communication, e.g., Exchange of Alarm Signals Between the Peripheral Cash Handling Devices Themselves***

Stieber is a newly-cited reference, which is alleged to alleviate the above-described deficiencies in Molbak and Dobbins. Stieber discloses a network of electronic cash handling devices. [Stieber, ¶2 and Figure 1 (reproduced below)]. The network is centered on a base cash handling device (12), which communicates with peripheral devices (13, 18, 20, 22) using a short-range, wireless communication network. [Stieber, ¶¶15-16].

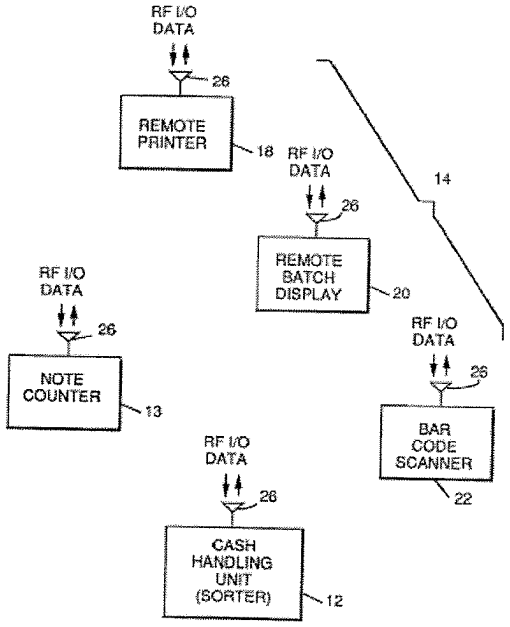

FIG. 1

The peripheral devices transmit various administrative data to the base cash handling device such that the base cash handling device is able to monitor, for example, the available cash level and overall performance of each peripheral device. [Stieber, ¶ 22].

In turn, the base cash handling device is able to transmit various commands to the peripheral devices. [Stieber, ¶ 22]. These include, for example, commands to halt the operation of peripheral devices chat are malfunctioning, or commands to display that peripheral devices are empty or full. [Stieber, ¶ 22].

However, in the network disclosed by Stieber, communication is only disclosed between the base cash handling device (12) and each of the peripheral devices (e.g., peripheral cash handling device (13)). ***Communication between one peripheral***

devices and another peripheral device is not disclosed. In fact, the type of network disclosed by Stieber would actually prevent communication between peripheral devices in this way, as is explained below.

The detailed description of Stieber focuses on network communication using the Bluetooth specification, in which networked devices operate in a piconet having a single "master" device (base cash handling device 12) and a plurality of "slave" devices (peripheral devices 13, 18, 20, 22). [Stieber, ¶¶ 24-26]. In such a Bluetooth network, slave devices (e.g., peripheral cash handling device (13)) are unable to communicate with anything other than the single master device (base cash handling device (12)). It is not possible for a slave device to communicate directly with another slave device.

As such, Stieber teaches away from the subject matter of Applicants' claim 1, i.e., whereby first, second and third acceptors in a communication network can all transmit an alarm signal to a plurality of other acceptors upon detecting a fraud attempt. Stieber teaches an entirely different type of communication network. All Stieber's devices, but the master device, are restricted to transmissions to one other device (the master).

Accordingly, with the network of Stieber, it would not be possible to achieve the immediate alarm signal transmission, due to the inability of the slave devices (13, 18, 20,22) to transmit to anything other than the single master device (base cash handling unit 12).

The Office Action at page 3 refers to paragraph 8 of Stieber and alleges that Stieber discloses that "each component cash handler communicates with a central controller as well as other cash handling machines." This is not correct.

Paragraph 8 of Stieber relates purely to the transmission capability of the base cash handling device (12) (master device in Bluetooth network). It does not relate to "each component cash handler" as stated by the Examiner.

Referring to paragraph 27 of Stieber, it is disclosed that the only other cash handler (13) in the network is configured to act as a slave and is therefore prevented from communication "with a central controller as well as other cash handling machines" for the reasons explained above.

In addition to Stieber not disclosing the claimed network of acceptors, the claimed feature of sending alarm signals to prevent fraud also is not disclosed by Stieber. The type of data transfer disclosed by Stieber is administrative in nature, and is purely to enable the base cash handling device (12) to monitor the performance of each individual peripheral device (13, 18, 20, 22). There is no disclosure or suggestion that data transferred from a peripheral device to the base cash handling device would be retransmitted by the base cash handling device (12) to other peripheral units, as would be essential if other peripheral devices were to receive an alarm signal.

Stieber makes no reference to its communication network being used to send alarm signals (of any kind) between its networked devices. Indeed, Stieber contains

no discussion of detecting attempted fraud whatsoever and as such it would not have been obvious to combine Stieber with the other cited documents.

Thus, Stieber shares the same deficiencies as Molbak and Dobbins. Stieber does not teach, disclose or suggest "first, second and third acceptors in communication with one another via the network" or "processing means [] configured to respond to a condition indicative of a fraud attempt by sending an alarm signal to a plurality of other acceptors using said communication means" as recited in Applicants' claim 1.

Accordingly, as Applicants cannot find these elements of claim 1 in Molbak, Dobbins and Stieber, at least independent claim 1 respectfully is asserted to be in condition for allowance. For at least similar reasons, independent claims 8, 14, 21 and 27, and dependent claims 2-7, 9-13, 15-20, 22-26 and 28-32 also are asserted to be in condition for allowance.

Applicants have chosen in the interest of expediting prosecution of this patent application to distinguish the cited documents from the pending claims as set forth above. These statements should not be regarded in any way as admissions that the cited documents are, in fact, prior art. Likewise, Applicants have chosen not to swear behind Molbak and Stieber, both cited by the office action, or to otherwise submit evidence to traverse the rejection at this time. Applicants, however, reserve the right, as provided by 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.131 and 1.132, to do so in the future as appropriate. Finally, Applicants have not specifically addressed the rejections of the dependent claims. Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims, from which they depend, are in condition

for allowance as set forth above. Accordingly, the dependent claims also are in condition for allowance. Applicants, however, reserve the right to address such rejections of the dependent claims in the future as appropriate.

CONCLUSION

For the above-stated reasons, this application is respectfully asserted to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable examination on the merits is requested. In the event that a telephone conference would facilitate the examination of this application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided.

THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL FEES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED FOR THE TIMELY CONSIDERATION OF THIS AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 AND 1.17, OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 13-4500, ORDER NO. 1193-4049.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: June 7, 2007

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